

## IMPACT OF ENGLISH INSTRUCTION AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ON THE STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGLISH AT THE LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** The current study is intended to examine the effect of time of learning, English teachers' characteristics, teaching and learning process characteristics, socio-economic context and students' characteristics in the teaching of English at the elementary schools on the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. Two kinds of research designs were implemented, an *ex post facto* and a tracer study. Therefore, the data were collected in two ways in order to (1) discover the students' English achievement at the lower secondary school and (2) observe the prior English instruction at the elementary school. The study adopted the statistical analysis of multiple regressions. The subjects consisted of 172 students who obtained the English instruction at the third and fourth grades of the elementary school, 172 students' parents, and 31 English teachers in the five (5) sub districts of *Pemerintah Kota Malang*. The students were to do the communicative English test and fill out two kinds of questionnaires; whereas, the teachers were interviewed. The students' parents had also to fill out a questionnaire on their perception on the English instruction at the elementary school. The finding shows that there is an impact of the teaching English starting at the fourth grade of elementary school on the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school

**Key words:** impact, teaching of English at the elementary school, achievement of English, lower secondary school.

Since English is widely regarded as the world's language, people learning English have in recent years increased in number. It implies that in part it reflects changes in public policy, such as lowering the age at which English is taught in

schools (Graddol, 1997:10-11; Gunarwan, 2000:312-325). This statement has been strengthened by a senior lecturer at RELC Singapore. For English language teaching in Southeast Asian context, Ho (1999:1-3) has claimed that attention is drawn to the fact that in the last five or six years, all the countries in this region, whether ESL or EFL by category, have had attempts to improve the teaching of English and change teaching strategies. One strategy in the EFL countries is to introduce English as a subject in the school curriculum in the primary years. He further states that the existence of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Countries) has made it possible for the nine of the member-states to communicate and cooperate by means of the English language. Thus, English is considered as an important tool for the ASEAN member-countries as a means for communication and cooperation.

As one of the member-countries, the Indonesian government has also taken steps in improving and changing the English teaching strategies. So, with the launch of the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 060/U/1993 dated 25th February 1993 and the Decree of the Provincial Department of Education and Culture, East Java, no. 1702/104/M/94 SK dated 30th March 1994 (the Basic Course Outlines for English at the Primary Education), English can be taught to elementary-school-aged learners. This implies lowering the age at which English is taught and fulfils the long-term national need. This is in line with what is postulated in the 1989 Constitution on the System of National Education expressing that the final goal of the English instruction at the elementary school is to enable the students to be functionally proficient in English in the globalisation era (Alwasilah, 1997:89).

Historically speaking, as a matter of fact, the genesis of the inclusion of English as one of the school subjects in Indonesia was as early as 1945, the time when World War II and the Revolution against the Dutch ended. Since then, the Indonesian government has made a decision to adopt English as the first foreign language taught in high schools (Kasbolah, 1988:50). Further, since the issue of the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 096/1967, English has been incorporated into the secondary-school curriculum as a compulsory subject to be taken by secondary-school students. Thus, prior to the launch of the 1994 Curriculum, English was only introduced at the secondary schools. However, due to the globalisation impact on the English teaching strategies in ASEAN countries, Indonesia, as one of the member-states, has attempted to introduce English as early as the elementary-school age (Gunarwan in Ho and Ward, 2000:312-325). For the imple-

mentation of the English instruction in elementary schools in Indonesia, it seems to be in line with several plausible arguments as follows.

First, adolescent children in diverse regions in Indonesia are required to speak English for the demands of the tourism industries. Secondly, at the present time there reveals unsuccessful English instruction in secondary schools as reflected in the unsatisfactory results of the high school final examinations (Huda, 1994:82-91 and Nababan, 1995:35-43). Thirdly, some educators believe that the earlier a child learns a foreign language, the better his/her opportunity in acquiring a high proficiency in the target language. Moreover, the longer an individual learns a language, the higher the proficiency she/he will achieve. Fourthly, Rachmajanti et al. (2000: 2-3) claim that, the Indonesian's government policy in this matter can be considered as an intrepid step and an anticipatory attempt in preparing Indonesia's future human resources in the global era.

Also, Huda (1994:82-91) and Astika (1996:118-129) discover that although the government's plan to introduce English at the elementary schools has received opposing responses, many elementary schools and private English courses have included English in their programs beginning from the fourth year or even earlier. As empirical evidence, Wahjanti (1978) discovered that prior to the legitimate launch of the minister's decree on the English instruction for young learners in 1994; twenty-two (22) elementary schools in *Pemerintah Kota (Pemkot) Malang* had introduced English as an extra-curricular subject. These schools developed their own teaching and learning activities for the English lesson. So, it is evident that English instruction in Indonesia has been of great interest long before the official announcement as being a local-content subject in primary schools. Rachmajanti et al. (ibid) found out that out of 352 *SDs* in *Pemkot Malang*, 51% of which (181 elementary schools) have taught English as a local-content subject – 80% government schools and 20% private ones.

However, due to the lack of unfavourable conditions in Indonesia, for instance, the unavailability of sufficiently good English teachers (Retmono, 1994:82-91), the English instruction is determined as a local content subject at the elementary-school level provided that (1) the society in which the school is located requires it, and (2) the school meets certain qualifications, such as: the provision of English teachers with a sufficient breadth of knowledge of 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Young Learners' and facilities accommodating teaching-learning activities in English. The resolution into the implementation of the subject, thus, relies on the school principal and school's conditions. Still dealing with the

pitfalls of the English instruction in Indonesia, Saukah (1997: 302) points out that one of the potential problems of implementing the 1994 English Curriculum is how elementary English syllabus should be developed and integrated into the 1994 Lower Secondary School English syllabus. Otherwise, there will be a lot of overlapped repetitions in the presentation of instructional materials. According to the 1994 English Basic Course Outline, the teaching of English at the primary schools is mainly aimed at arousing the learners' interest in learning a foreign language. Eventually it is expected that the skills of understanding verbal and non-verbal expressions in simple English can be developed at later levels of education. Both language components and language skills are presumed to be presented, with the focus on the development of Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing in accordance with their individual developmental level within the mastery of 500 (five hundred) English words applying the meaning-based approach. Based on the local-content curriculum, the teaching of English at the primary school level may commence at the fourth year due to the fact that at the first three years they are still concentrating on learning their national language, viz., Bahasa Indonesia, and Mathematics.

As a matter of fact, the years at primary school are highly important in children's intellectual, physical, emotional/affective, and social development. They have to undergo a series of stages, progressively acquiring skills that are considered to be necessary by the society they live in. The stages are also applicable to the way children learn a foreign language. Therefore, the way to teach it, obviously depends on their developmental stage. For instance, it is not fair to ask an eleven-year-old child to match picture halves (Phillips, 1993: 5-8).

From the theoretical viewpoint, it can be presumed that the younger the children are, the more holistic learners they are. They respond to language according to what it does or what they can do with it. Let alone think it as an abstract system. Also, young learners have the advantage of being great mimics, are often unself-conscious, and are commonly prepared to enjoy activities prepared by their teacher. This implies that it is not difficult to maintain a high degree of motivation and make the English class an enjoyable and stimulating experience for them as long as the teacher is creative enough (Phillips, 1993:5-8). Thus, teachers for young learners are of a prominent role in class.

This is also true for young EFL learners, aging between nine and twelve years old. The way they learn a foreign language is different from that of the older ones. They are still fond of fantasy or imagination, and prefer conducting various activi-

ties (Scott and Ytreberg 1990:03-5; Philips, 1993:7). This implies that stories are, indeed, indispensable to the young learners because they enhance the children's potential learning development (Wright, 1995:5-9). They can provide an ideal introduction to the foreign language as it is presented in a context familiar to the learners (Brewster, et al., 1992:158-159). Another implication is that children learn better and faster by doing something. Therefore, task-based activities such as singing songs, playing games, doing puzzles and riddles, reciting nursery rhymes and the like are highly recommended for them.

To confirm the unsatisfactory results of the implementation of English instruction at primary school level, there have been numerous studies related to it. Previously research findings were discovered by the following researchers, among others: first, Dardiri (1994:74) found out in his study that the teachers in most elementary schools in *Malang* mostly employed such simple techniques as question and answer, memorizing, and providing explanation. Even, 64% of the teachers were of the opinion that the students hated listening to the teachers' monotonous explanation. Second, Rohmah (1996:67) in her research findings discovered that the teachers of both schools-- *SDN Percobaan and SD Dharma Wanita IKIP Malang* rarely put storytelling, memorization, and speech into practice in the classroom. Both teachers were fond of frequently employing the use of dialogue, games, question and answer, songs, and dramatization. Third, Rachmajanti et al. (2000, 44-59) discovered that such variables as parents' characteristics, environment (school and home) characteristics, and the teaching and learning process characteristics mostly determined the learners' achievement in learning English.

Other previous studies investigated the effect of learning English in the elementary school age on the students' achievement in English as a school subject at the higher level of education. First, Rachmajanti et al (2000:44-59) discovered that the combination of the parents' characteristics, the environment characteristics, and the teaching and learning process characteristics had an impact on the students' English achievement at the elementary school. Second, a qualitative study conducted by Santoso (2004:70-144) at *SLTP 6 Malang* found out that the preceding educational experience of learning English at the elementary school had an impact on the students' performance at *SLTP*. Further, it revealed that language learning relied on such aspects as the quality of learning, the social factors, the learner characteristics, and exposure outside the class. It was then inferred that the teaching of English at early ages might provide a positive effect on the students' English achievements at the higher level of education. However, in order to identify the

success of language learning, particularly for young learners, there exist some factors which are necessarily to be put into consideration. First of all, when learning a language, a child should encounter three kinds of acquisition tasks- a phonological system, a semantic system, and a syntactic system - in three different stages as well as strategies- the utilization of extra linguistic factors- in the course of communication.

Indeed, the child's language learning differs from that of adults in terms of physical/biological, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Some linguistic experts (Krashen as quoted by McLaughlin, 1978:71; Dunn, 1983:7; Chomsky and Slobin as quoted by Brumfit et al., 1991:216); Halliwell, 1993:3; Elliot and Frisbie, 1994:23-28) postulated that children commonly acquire another language more quickly and promote an error-free speech, particularly in their pronunciation; whereas, the adults normally retain an accent long after they reach fluency. In general, all children seem to use certain structures prior to others and obtain similar stages in the development of many structures. In relation to emotion, children are different in temperament so this emotional aspect may affect their ability to take part in language learning. Moreover, they are socially equipped with the instincts of interaction and talk which are vital in language learning. Still other experts (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983:54-56) claimed that there exist four differences in the learning of the first and second language for young learners in formal education, namely, the role motivation, the acquisition of form and usage, the amount of exposure, and the quality of models, in this case, the teacher in the classroom.. Further, elementary-school-aged learners possess exclusive attributes in that they have to be taught another language with the principle of "learning by doing" as recommended by Scott and Ytreberg (1990:5-6) and Halliwell (1993:7).

Dunkin and Biddle (1974: 36-48), in addition, proposed a conceptual model of a teaching and learning process in the classroom. There should be four main variables incorporated in a language instructional process- presage variables comprising the teacher's formative experience and properties; context variables incorporating pupil formative experience and properties, school and community contexts and classroom context; process variables consisting of the interaction of teacher classroom behavior and pupil classroom behavior; and product variables displaying immediate pupil growth and long term pupil effects. Thus, language learning is affected by both internal and external factors.

All in all, the implementation of English instruction in a country should be reinforced and supported by the stake holders of the country for the sake of success

of the second language learning. In Indonesia, in particular, the inclusion of English instruction as a local content subject in the elementary school curriculum has been legalized by the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 060/U/1993 and the Decree of the Provincial Department Education and Culture, East Java, No. 1702/104/M/94 SK. With the publication of the decree, a lot of elementary schools competed to implement the English instruction at their schools without considering the required conditions previously mentioned. It turned out that most research findings have not displayed satisfactory results due to several factors, among others: the English teacher qualifications, the unavailability of supporting facilities, and the insufficient exposure to the target language.

Therefore, this study is intended to investigate whether or not the English instruction at the elementary school (dealing with time of learning, teachers' characteristics, teaching and learning process characteristics, socio-economic context and students' characteristics) in the five Sub Districts in *Pemerintah Kota Malang* has contributed towards the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary.

## METHOD

The present study was *ex post facto* in design since there is no treatment to the subjects of the study which may change their entry behavior (Ary et al., 1985:271-291), and also a tracer study since some parts of the data were obtained by tracing back the subjects' previous language learning. Therefore, the data collection was conducted in two ways in order to (1) investigate the students' learning achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school and (2) observe the effects of the prior English instruction at the elementary schools on the students' achievement at the first year of the lower secondary school. Therefore, the study adopts two types of statistical analyses (bivariate analysis): correlation and stepwise linear regression (Bloomers, 1977; Tabanick and Fidell, 1989:123-189; Hair et al., 1995:148-213 and Santoso, 2000:145-216).

There are 22 (twenty-two) state lower secondary schools (*Sekolah Lanjutan Tingkat Pertama*= *SLTP*) in the Municipality of Malang which act as the accessible population, but only one *SLTP* is taken as the sample of the study, viz. *SLTP Negeri I Malang* due to the previous survey showing two important facts. First, so far it has been considered as a school with a high academic reputation because

most *SLTP Negeri 1* graduates have acquired high final national exam scores (*NUN*= *Nilai Ujian Nasional*). As evidence, in the academic year 2002-2003 it reached 29.29 or equal to 9.76, the highest *NUN* in *Pemkot Malang* and the second highest in East Java. At that time the *NUN* in *Pemkot Malang* ranged from 19.66 to 29.22 (*Diknas Propinsi Jatim*, 2002-2003). Consequently, elementary school graduates are of high interest to study there. Second, because of its qualifications this school is always attended by students from more than ten (10) different elementary schools at the beginning of every academic year.

There were totally 31 (thirty-one) elementary schools with approximately 33 (thirty-three) English teachers- *SDN Percobaan 1* and *MIN Malang 1* have 2 (two) English teachers- and 172 (one hundred and seventy two) students involved as the samples of the study (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Categorisation of School Samples into Groups**

No.	Sub District	Group-1 Schools	Group-2 Schools
A	Klojen (8 SD/ MI)	SD Sriwedari SDN Kauman 1 SDN Kauman 3	MIN Malang 1 SDN Lab UM SDN Penanggungan 2 SDN Bareng 1 SDN Kasin
B	Lowokwaru (10 SD/ MI)	SDN Percobaan SDN Dinoyo 3 SDN Dinoyo 6 SDN Sumbersari 4	SD Dharma Wanita SDN Ketawanggede 1 SDN Lowokwaru 2 SDN Sumbersari 1 SDN Merjosari 2 SDN Merjosari 5
C	Blimbing (4 SD/ MI)	1. SDN Blimbing 1	SDN Purwodadi 1 SDN Purwantoro 1 SDN Bunulrejo 9
D	Kedung Kandang (4 SD/ MI)	1. SDN Sawojajar 1	SDN Lesanpuro 6 SDN Sawojajar 6 SDN Madyopuro 1
E	Sukun (5 SD/ MI)	SDN Tanjungrejo 3 SDN Kebonsari 3	SDN Ciptomulyo 2 SDN Mulyorejo 4 SDN Tanjungrejo 4
<b>Total number</b>		<b>11 Group-1 schools</b>	<b>20 Group-2 schools</b>



After being classified into two main groups, there existed 11 (eleven) SD/ MI in Group-1 schools in which the English instruction started at Year 3 and twenty (20) SD/ MI in Group-2 schools in which the English subject was firstly introduced at Year 4 respectively. So, there were totally 31 (thirty-one) elementary schools available for this study. In addition to the samples above, there were other subjects involved, viz., the headmaster of each elementary school, the librarians, the English teachers at the elementary school, the students' parents, as well as the English teachers of SLTP Negeri 1 Malang.

To gather the data required in the study, 3 (three) kinds of research instruments were employed: an interview guide and its guideline for the head master, the librarian and the English teachers at the elementary schools, 2 (two) kinds of questionnaires for the students—one for obtaining data on the English instruction at the elementary school and one for the English instruction at the first year of lower secondary school, a set of questionnaire for the students' parents, and a communicative English test for the students (Gronlund, 1977; Heaton, 1991; Hunston, *et. al*, 1997). The interview guide and the questionnaires were related with the aspects and questions dealing with the independent variables while the test to the dependent variable. Prior to the data collection in the field, all instruments were tried-out in schools other than SLTP Negeri 1 Malang.

Two kinds of data were gathered for this study, viz., major data and minor one. The first were in the form of test, a set of questionnaire for the students on the implementation of English instruction at SD (the first questionnaire) and the interview guide and its guideline on the implementation of English instruction at SD; and the second referred to a set of questionnaire for the students on the implementation of English instruction at SLTP (the second questionnaire) and a set of questionnaire for the students' parents on the implementation of English instruction at SLTP (the third questionnaire). The collection of the minor data was to support the major one in that they would provide further description of the major data.

All data were collected in some SDs and SLTP Negeri 1 in the Municipality of Malang during the second semester in the academic year of 2003 and the first semester in the academic year of 2004. To collect the entire data at the elementary schools in particular, the researcher was assisted by 5 (five) trained field workers--two English teachers (from SD and SLTP) and three others from the English Departments of the State University of Malang and the State of Islamic University in Malang. The preliminary study and the communicative test were administered dur-

ing the first semester and the other instruments—the questionnaires and the interview guide in the period of the second semester.

Because there are two different kinds of data—major and minor, they are treated and analyzed in different ways. The major data collected from the test, interview guide, and the first questionnaire were statistically analyzed using the analysis of descriptive quantitative and the multiple regression analysis with the level of significance of .05 or smaller. The analysis results in a regression value (Tabachnick, 1989: 55-56). In addition, Hatch and Lazaraton (1991: 480-481) claims that some words of caution are to be fulfilled in the application of the multiple regression analysis, the so-called “the restrictions to multiple regression,” among others: first, the variables should be interval or truly continuous and that the relationship be linear in nature; second, the correlation values should be accurate since the procedure builds on correlation; third, multicollinearity should be avoided; fourth, the more variables we put in the regression equation, the larger the N size for the study. The rough rule of thumb is 30 (thirty) subjects for each independent variable. Fourth, there should be homoscedasticity and normality. Finally, autocorrelation or independence should not occur.

Whereas, the minor data from a set of questionnaire for the students on the implementation of English instruction at SLTP (the second questionnaire) and a set of questionnaire for the students’ parents on the implementation of English instruction at SLTP (the third questionnaire) were computed and analyzed on a frequency basis for the close-ended questions and description for the open-ended ones.

## FINDINGS

Table 2 provides a summary table of all regression analyses demonstrating both the observed F significance and the values of contribution of each variable in combination.

**Table 2. Summary Table of All Regression Analyses**

Independent Variables in Regression Equation	Groups-1&2 Schools			Group-1 School			Group-2 School		
	R	F Signif	Beta	R	F Signif	Beta	R	F Signif	Beta
Variables 5, 1, & 4	.05797	.0180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Table 2 Continued*

-Variable 5	-	-	-173210	-	-	-	-	-	-
-Variable 1	-	-	-151018	-	-	-	-	-	-
-Variable 4	-	-	.251542	-	-	-	-	-	-
Variable 5, 1, 2, 3, & 4	-	-	-	.08893	.2551	*	-	-	-
Variable 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	.10770	.0285	.328171

Note: \* means no further analysis of contribution

When the data of Groups 1 and 2 are combined, the relationship of the variables under investigation (Variables 5, 4 and 1) takes place positively and significantly. In Table 2 reveals that Variable 5 (the students' characteristics) contributes the value of  $\beta = .173210$ , Variable 1 (the time of learning)  $\beta = .151018$ , and Variable 4 (the socio-economic context)  $\beta = .251542$ . However, further analyses separating Group 1 and Group 2 data show that in Group 2 data, only one model is observed to show a positive and significant correlation of variables in which Variable 4 (the socio-economic context) demonstrates the highest value of contribution as indicated by its  $\beta$  value being .328171. The data in Group 1, however, do not indicate a positive and significant relationship.

In other words, the analysis yielded the following results. Firstly, the model of relationship with the highest degree of significance was observed in the combination of three independent variables: the students' characteristics, the time of learning, the socio-economic context, and the dependent variable: the students' achievement. It implies that the students' achievement has been accounted by the contribution of the combination of the students' characteristics with a figure of 17.32%, the time of learning with a figure of 15.10%, and the socio-economic context with a figure of 25.15%. In other words, there is a positive and significant relationship between some dominant factors in combination in ELT at the elementary school and the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. Secondly, there is no model of relation best suited in the combination of the factors in ELT starting at the third year of elementary school and the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. In other words, there is no positive and significant relationship between some dominant factors in combination in ELT starting at the third year of elementary school and the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. Thirdly, the only variable, viz., the socio-economic context has contributed

32.81% on the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. In other words, there is a positive and significant relationship between some dominant factors in combination in ELT starting at the fourth year of elementary school and the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. In addition to the statistical analyses, the major data, viz., the students' first questionnaire and the teachers' interview guide on their perception on the English instruction at the elementary school, were descriptively analyzed. The results of the brief descriptions are as follows.

First, the English handbook under the title "First Step" was mostly used by the students of both groups though they did not like it due to some reasons. Instead, they proposed the use of some more interesting English textbooks. Next, the students of both groups also provided some recommendations on what kinds of English teachers they prefer to have, the way of teaching and learning they prefer and the facilities to facilitate learning. Also, it deals with the time of learning. Group-1 students obtained longer time of learning English at the elementary school than Group-2 students. Then, the English teachers of both groups mostly graduated from the English department but only a few were equipped with the knowledge of EYL as an elective subject when they were at the college. In addition, not all English teachers in both groups employed instructional techniques suitable for the students like playing games, conducting role plays, singing songs. Finally, not all schools in both groups were well equipped with facilities to support the teaching and learning of English. At last, in fact, most students were willing to do homework. However, they seldom went to the school library to improve their English due to the unavailability of English printed materials.

Eventually, the results of the major data were supported by the results of the analyses of the minor data: the parents' questionnaire on their perception on the English instruction at the elementary school and the students' second questionnaire on their perception of the English Instruction at the lower secondary school. First, it was justified that parents of both groups in the five sub districts agreed with the inclusion of the English subject in the elementary school curriculum because it would facilitate learning at the level of secondary school or be as a basic knowledge and competence for a higher level of education, and function as an international language in the global era. Second, almost all students had a great interest in English when they were at the lower secondary school since their previous learning of English at the elementary school accommodated learning the target language at this level.

## DISCUSSION

Upon the data analysis as described beforehand, the research findings are then interpreted from different points of view. Firstly, it was found out that the contribution of the combination of three aspects of the English instruction the elementary school— the time of learning (17.23%), the socio-economic context (15.10%) and the students' characteristics (25.15%) – has an impact upon the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. This is especially evident for the Group-2 schools at which the English instruction was introduced at Grade 4. This has been in line with the theoretical thesis postulated by some educators (Lenneberg, 1967; Stern, 1969; Piaget, 1973; Krashen, 1973; and Long, 1988) believing that the earlier a child learns a target language, the better her/his opportunity in acquiring a high proficiency in it. Moreover, Graddol (1997) and Ho (1999) claim that because English is considered the lingua franca in the world, people learning English have increased in number recently implying that public policy in some countries has changed, in that, they have lowered the enrolment age at which English is taught at school, i.e., as early as the elementary school.

Thus, it is regarded to be wise for the Indonesian government to introduce the English subject at Grade 4 of the elementary school, as legally declared in the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 060/U/1993 dated 25th February 1993 stating that English is allocated 2 times 45 minutes per week. This finding was also supported by a case study conducted in 1995 yielding that the students who learned English in the private courses at their elementary school age had the best English achievement when they were at the secondary level. Another research in Zagreb, Croatia, in the continent of Europe in 1994 discovered that the first grade learners aging 6 to 7 is a good time to start. Further, another case study by Santoso (2004) at the SMP Negeri 6 Malang posit another evidence that preceding educational experience in learning English at the elementary school had an impact on the students' performance at the junior high school.

On the contrary, it was identified from the finding that the English instruction at the elementary schools starting at Grade 3 did not show any impact upon the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. This is understood since the English teachers at the elementary schools did not have any guidelines to teach English at this grade, let alone English materials for this level. The only guidelines and materials of East Java version available at that time were

intended for the fourth grade students. It can be inferred that the materials for the fourth grade students are partly presented at Grade 3, so when the students are at Grade 4, they come across a lot of repeated teaching items. As a result, they did not gain more instructional materials at the fourth grade since the teaching items for the third and fourth grades were of the same learning scope. As discovered and pedagogically justified by Bliesener (1994), the introduction of early teaching of English in primary schools should be equipped with an open curriculum framework in that what primary schools have achieved in their foreign language classes are to be utilized by secondary schools. Second, another impact on the students' achievement of English deals with the socio- economic context at school and outside school which has contribution on the students' achievement at higher level of education. This has been evident for the theories of language learning in general and second language learning in children in specific claimed by Dunkin and Biddle (1974) and Elley and Mangubhai (1983) stating that in learning a language, some internal and external aspects have to be accounted for such as presage variables, context variables, process variables and product variables. The presage variables involve the role of teachers and their properties, the context variables deal with the students' characteristics and their environment, the process variables incorporate the teaching and learning activities in the classroom, and finally the product variables refer to the immediate pupil growth and the long-term pupils effects.

Moreover, this finding was supported by Rachmajanti et al. (2000) in their study yielding that three factors—the parents' characteristics, the environment characteristics, and the characteristics of teaching and learning process in the classroom--controlled the achievement of elementary school students in learning English as a local load subject. Also, Santoso (2004) in his recent case study at SMP Negeri 6 Making discovered that success in language learning depends more on the quality of teaching, social factors, learner's characteristics and outside school exposure. In short, the social-context at the elementary school is one of the contributing aspects in the students' achievement of English at the higher level of education. Indeed, this is in link with what Elley and Mangubhai (1983) claimed that with respect to second language learning for young children in which they are exposed less to the target language, children should learn much from the redundancy in their language environment.

As evidence, with regard to the availability of supporting facilities, especially those of Group-2 schools, most elementary schools were equipped with English textbooks, English magazines or storybooks, dictionaries in the library (though

limited) and some instructional media such as pictures, flash cards, real objects, and a tape recorder plus one or two English cassettes of songs and stories. Only three schools in the five districts, MIN Malang 1 Malang, SDN Percobaan 1 Malang, and SDN Blimbing 3, had AVA equipment. On the other hand, at home, the students were more exposed with English sources to learn English such as English storybooks, English children songs and computer games. Thus, though facilities at the elementary school at that time were restricted, the students have more English exposure outside school.

The third aspect providing an impact on their achievement in this study is the students' characteristics—their own interest and motivation in learning English. This is to support the theoretical insights by Scott and Ytreberg (1990) justifying that one of the young learners' inherent attributes is the element of curiosity. Such a finding of the interest and motivation in English is also reinforced by the studies of Gardner and Lambert (in Hermann, 1980) and Djigunovic and Bartolovic (1994) which found out that the learners' positive attitude towards the foreign language and that towards learning it played a crucial factor. This is in link with the evidence discovered in the study, among others: 1) most of the students (about 65%) liked to learn English at the elementary school due to their own inner drive; 2) to show their interest and motivation, they by doing homework listening to English songs at home; 3) about reading English storybooks, most of them (72.16%) expressed that they often read English storybooks at home as well as in the school library, if any; 4) dealing with English film on TV, they said they (almost 90%) often watched English films on TV at home; and finally it was discovered that most of them (approximately 70.93%) felt unhappy or disappointed in the absence of the English teacher at school or if the English subject was not presented in the school curriculum. Point 4 is in congruence with the survey conducted by Suyanto *et. al.* (2001) claiming that 65.2% elementary school students in Pemerintah and Kabupaten Malang agreed that English was indispensable to be taught as early as the elementary school and 91.3% were of the opinion that they were fond of learning the target language in spite of its difficulties they faced in the course of learning it.

Other evidence to disclose the students' interest in English is displayed by the students' opinions on the English instruction at the elementary school in the open-ended questionnaire, among others: 1) they prefer to have English textbooks with interesting colorful pictures, having various learning tasks including games, songs and stories; 2) the English teachers are patient, more creative in selecting the instructional materials and provide a clearer explanation; and 3) they prefer to work

in small groups with attractive learning activities inside the classroom as well as outdoors utilizing various instructional media. Hence, their comments reflect the children's exclusive characteristics as postulated by Scott and Ytreberg (1990), and Halliwell (1993). These students' characteristics are different from those of the adult learners (McLaughlin, 1978).

In relation to the justification put forward by the learners above, the English teachers in both group schools also stated that 1) almost all students were willing to do the English homework most of the time without their instructions; and 2) once an English song was taught, they would sing it in the classroom any time they had a chance to do it. In other words, the students were interested and motivated to learn English whenever they were at the elementary school level and their interest and motivation were reinforced when they attended the first grade of the lower secondary school.

Fourth, as Elley and Mangubhai (1983) and Scott and Ytreberg (1990) highlighted, to learn L2, young learners depend on extrinsic motivation which can be aroused by parents and the English teacher. However, based on the findings of the study, it is identified that the former provides contributions on the students' English achievement but not the latter. The study by Djigunovic and Bartolovic (1994) has strengthened this finding. It was discovered that the students' positive attitude towards learning English was definitely influenced by their parents.

Out of the five aspects investigated, it turns out that two—the teacher's characteristics and the teaching and learning process characteristics—did not have an impact on the students' achievement of English. Based on the theoretical insights, for young learners the quality of models plays an important role (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Scott Ytreberg, 1990; Halliwell, 1993 and Bliesener, 1994) because in learning L2 they depend on the strength of extrinsic motivation. This finding is also supported by another study conducted by Suyanto (2001). The findings justify that elementary-school English teachers in Pemerintah Kota and Kabupaten Malang were mostly (71,4%) S-1 graduates but only 46% took English as their major; and 2) they hardly ever utilized such instructional media as puppets and a tape recorder in the teaching and learning process for the young learners.

As evidence, several points are identified in this current study. First, even though most of them (8.65%) graduated from the S-1 Program of the English Department, only 8% (3 teachers) had the knowledge of teaching English for young learners (EYL) in a formal education. In other words, most English teachers have the idea of EYL through a very short workshop on EYL lasting one day or so



which is considered insufficient since they require more knowledge and practice in the classroom and outside the classroom. Next, due to the insufficient knowledge of EYL, the principle of "learning by doing" (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990 and Halliwell, 1993) is seldom implemented. Even a few teachers believe in the realm of note-taking instead of oral presentation to introduce a new teaching point. Also, instructional media used by the English teachers in some schools are limited to flash cards, real objects, and picture cards, and so are the teaching techniques. In fact, children learning L2 require more on the extrinsic motivation or the role of the English teachers (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983). Therefore, a variety of teaching aids such as the employment of puppets (Suyanto et al., 2001) and big books (Rachmajanti, 1999) and various instructional techniques such as outdoor activities, singing songs and playing games are supposed to be frequently applied to arouse the students' motivation. If it happened at the time that the young learners were actively involved in the teaching and learning process, it was not because of the teachers' initiatives in teaching but because of the learners' natures as children—being active. At last, it seems that the English textbook "First Step" used by most elementary schools at that time is not the kind of textbook the students' like because it has a structure-based design and is not picturesque. As a matter of fact, this book was not ranked the best ten based on Suyanto's study (2001) implying that the English handbook is regarded to be not fulfilling the requirements of a good textbook for young learners having unique attributes.

As has been mentioned in the beginning, the major data were strengthened by some other supplementary/minor ones, among others: the parents' opinions on the English instruction at the elementary school and the students' further perception of the English instruction when they were at the first grade of the lower secondary school.

As indicated by the result of the data analysis of the parents' questionnaire, it revealed that the students' parents in all schools in the five sub districts fully supported the teaching of English at the elementary school. This proof is in line with what Elley and Mangubhai (1983) and Alwasilah (1997) postulated that young learners of L2 should be reinforced by some extrinsic motivation because learning L2 is not an urgent need to communicate and comprehend things around them in their daily life. Therefore, the parents' role outside school is important for the success of learning English. In other words, their parents' provision of English storybooks, English magazines, and cassettes of English songs are of a great assistance for the students to learn more English outside the classroom.

Other evidence refers to the parents' attitude with different incomes. It is justified that those with the higher income and limited spare time at home tend not to teach English to their children even though they are proficient in English. So, for them, the English instruction at school is the one they rely on.

Further, the students' high interest and motivation in learning English is justified by their achievement of learning English. First, in terms of school context they claim when attending the first grade of lower secondary school, their English learning at this level was shaped by their previous experience in learning English at the elementary school level. As evidence all students' achieved scores above 60 points out of 100 points for the English subject in their school transcript. This is in line with what they achieved when tested for the study. As a comparison, for group-1 students, the mean in the school transcript is 80.80 points and in the study 76.56 points; whereas, for group-2 students, the mean in the school transcript is 77.11 points and in the study 79.90 points. This evidence shows that their interest and motivation are high. The high interest and motivation are also evidenced by the findings of Suyanto (2000) claiming that most SLTP students from 10 provinces throughout Indonesia were interested in learning English when they were at the elementary school even though 50% of them complained of the difficulties they faced while learning it.

Second, another piece of evidence indicating the students' high interest and motivation is revealed by their home activities, that is, they keep on improving their English by listening to English music, reading English stories or novels, watching English programs on TV at home. So, their formal encounters at school are followed up by outside school activities. In addition, they feel relieved at school because the English teachers seldom ask them to take notes but apply various teaching techniques and instructional media instead.

All in all, once the students like the subject from the start, their interest and motivation to learn English are retained or perhaps highlighted in a higher level of education. Therefore, the setting up of a favorable atmosphere in the teaching and learning of English is required.

Of practical concern, there are of two folds. Firstly, the teaching of English at the elementary school starting at the fourth year is likely to accommodate learning English at the first year of lower secondary school, particularly at the first semester. This evidence is also strengthened by the study in Australia (Sadtono, 1997:8) demonstrating that chances are children who learned a foreign language in the elementary school would continue learning the language in higher level of educa-

tion. Secondly, the appropriate teaching of EYL can arouse the students' interest and motivation in learning English. This proposition requires careful follow-up actions for TEYL, that is, first, EYL teachers at the elementary school should be equipped with the knowledge of TEYL with the principle of "learning by doing" so that the English instruction at this level is not threatening but fun instead. Second, the English materials for EYL should be specially designed following the principles previously stated, and presented accordingly. This is also supported by Suyanto's studies (2001, 2002 and 2003) stating that young learners' instructional materials should be in line with the principle of "learning by doing". Third, exposure to English is not only at school but at home as well to improve the students' English proficiency.

Another implication relates theoretically. It is revealed in the current study that interest and motivation are keys on the part of the students in learning English. However, there seems to be an interesting phenomenon between the findings in the present study and theories of language acquisition. Theoretically, the younger the students are, the better the students' achievement will be. The study reveals that rather than those data collected from Group-1 students (Grade 3), the close relationship is found in the data from Group-2 students, which seems conflicting the theory. However, this interesting phenomenon can be explained roughly as follows. The introduction of English can arouse the learners' interest and motivation if properly managed. This requires an environment which is conducive for further acquisition, which implies learning achievement. But, following this there seems to be a psychological constraint, that is retaining what is already acquired. If this is true, then, there is a challenge for (management of EYL) investigating the relationship between acquisition/learning and retention.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In general, it can be concluded that some factors considered dominant in ELT at the elementary school correlate with the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school. This is particularly evidenced with the data collected from the students of the fourth grade of elementary school. Meanwhile, the data collected from the third grade do not empirically demonstrate the relationship between some dominant factors in ELT at the elementary school and the students' achievement of English at the first year of lower secondary school.

The positive and significant relationship is demonstrated in 3 (three) kinds of patterns of relationship: (1) the combination of independent variables such as the students' characteristics, the teaching and learning process characteristics, the time of learning, the socio-economic context, and the teacher's characteristics; (2) the combination of independent variables such as the students' characteristics, the teaching and learning process characteristics, the time of learning, and the socio-economic context; the combination of independent variables such as the students' characteristics, the time of learning, and the socio-economic context. The contribution of these independent variables in combination ranges from 15.10% up to 25.15%.

However, the two independent variables: the teacher's characteristics and the teaching and learning process characteristics which might provide contributions to the students' achievement of English play little role in the study. The probable reasons are, first, the teachers are insufficiently competent in enhancing the students' competence and motivation. As a result, their role in the classroom has not been meaningfully reflected in the students' learning achievement. This situation is worsened by the second possible reason, that is, the teachers involved in the study are assumed to be not creative enough to make use of the available various learning resources, instructional media and teaching techniques appropriate for young learners, even though they state that they have joined some short in-service training for EYL.

The evidence above seems to be in contradiction to Sadtono's personal observation (1997) in a private elementary school in Surabaya in which the English teacher could make the classroom atmosphere full of fun and amusing so that the learners enjoyed the English class and showed up a fairly good achievement in their compositions.

Based on the previously mentioned findings, and the above conclusions, the subsequent suggestions are recommended. The suggestions are addressed to the curriculum developers and decision makers in education at the Department of National Education, the elementary school principals, the English teachers and its KKG, the English book writers, the English Department of the Teacher Training College as well as other researchers.

The first suggestion is addressed to the curriculum developers and decision makers in education at the Department of National Education. Since the elementary-school aged children are still concentrating on learning Bahasa Indonesia and Mathematics at the first three years, Grades 1-3, it is recommended that the English

instruction commencing at the fourth grade as postulated in the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture previous and the Decree of the Provincial Department of Education and Culture remains as it is in that it is recommended not to start the English instruction as early as Grade 3 or even lower (Grade 1). There is an interesting issue concerning the theories on language learning and the empirical evidence as revealed by the study. As discovered in the previous study, the crucial thing is the quality of teaching and learning which implies that the English teachers play an important role in the teaching and learning process.

The subsequent recommendation goes to the elementary school principals and the KKG. In order to achieve better results in the English instruction at the elementary school, the school principals are recommended to adopt one of the following alternative steps. First, the school principal must be consistent with what has been postulated in the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture concerning the time when the English instruction is implemented, viz., as early as Grade 4 not earlier because the children are still focusing on learning Bahasa Indonesia and Mathematics as the basic knowledge. Second, she or he should recruit English teachers with sufficient qualifications on the English proficiency and knowledge of EYL as expected by the students' parents. This can be realized by fostering a good cooperation with the English Department of Teacher Training Colleges in Malang. Third, she or he has to assist the English teachers to empower themselves with functional skills in teaching English for young learners by activating the club for strengthening the work of teachers of the same field of study (Kelompok Kerja Guru=KKG) so that they can share their experience. Fourth, if possible, she or he encourages the English teachers to carry out the so-called "mutual teacher observations" or "collaborative teaching" that is, the teachers mutually observe their colleagues even though they do not come from the same elementary schools. This can be conducted through the school principal agreement. Finally, the school principals should provide opportunities for the English teachers who have not possessed TEYL to join the short-term program on the certification of TEYL held by the English Department of Teacher Training Colleges. Indeed, to realize this effort, the school should cooperate with parents as a part of the community whose duty is to accommodate the teaching and learning process of English. This is in line with the government's new program (effective since 1999) called the Creating Learning Communities for Children (CLCC)" intended to improve the quality of learning English in Indonesia where the role of parents is highly recognized.

Next is for the English teachers by conducting a few positive steps. First, since most of the English teachers are graduates of the English Department, it is recommended that they should be proactive to make *Kelompok Kerja Guru* more active in each sub district so as to exchange teaching experiences among them. So far only *Kelompok Kerja Guru* in the sub district of Kiojen has had a routine gathering to share their experience. Second, it is still related with *Kelompok Kerja Guru*. The club can cooperate with an English Department of a particular college with EYL subject in its curriculum by means of inviting an expert of EYL to share the latest issue on EYL, for instance, how to handle a big sized class or how to assess the students' proficiency in English. Third, another recommended way is by conducting a mutual observation in that the English teachers attempt to visit other English teachers and observe their way of teaching. Fourth, those without the provision of EYL knowledge can join an English course for EYL carried out by the English Department with the subject on EYL. At the end of the course, they will be equipped with a special certificate of EYL which Functions as a teaching license for TEYL.

The following suggestion is addressed to the English book writers. It is recommended that they should provide various learning activities or tasks in the handbook with the principle of learning by doing and enchanting lay-out. Also, the writers should follow the 2005 criteria of writing English handbooks released by the National Book Centre. The purpose is also to make the users particularly the English teachers aware of the differences between English for young learners and adult learners. By looking at the various tasks conducted by them, it is expected that the English teachers can adopt them as a method of assessing the students' English proficiency and performance. For example, if there exists a task of a role play or a game in the handbook or textbook, the sample role play or game can be a piece of inspiration for the teachers to design such an activity for the students' assessment.

Subsequently, may design a program of certification for teachers for EYL, particularly for those who have equipped themselves with an S- I degree of English Education but lack in knowledge of EYL as well as for those who have been teaching English to young learners at the elementary school but with no background of TEYL.

At the end of the short-term course (about four or five months), the attendants will obtain a special certificate of TFYL allowing them to teach English for young learners. However, if the English teacher has no English proficiency in advance,

another semester precedes the short course for TEYL. So, there will be a two-semester course. Second, it is recommended that the English Departments should make a specific program called an in-on-in service training for the English teachers with no EYL. This means after joining an in-service training for one or two days, the participants are entitled to implement what they have obtained in the training at their real process of teaching and learning, and then a week or some couples of weeks later are supposed to report their experiments to be discussed with the EYL, instructors. Third, it is indispensable to set up a kind of consultative clinic for TEYL for the purpose of solving im-promptu instructional problems faced by the English teachers of EYL in the field.

The final suggestion goes to other researchers interested in the implementation of TEYL in relation to the impact of it on the higher level of education. As this study has indicated some limitations, it is then recommended that these limitations are to be reduced for coming investigations, that is, first, in the course of developing the research instruments, an observation sheet should be constructed in order to observe what the English teacher is doing in the classroom in order to portray an English class as a complete scene. Second, if observations are regarded as one of the research instruments, prospective researchers should decide to the right time when they are to be conducted. Third, the parents characteristics as an independent variable should be accounted to discover some other probable impacts on the students' achievement of English. Fourth, the data collected are suggested to be analyzed applying the path analysis, for instance to see whether there are different patterns of findings. Fifth, it is suggested that the teacher-made tests are to be investigated to make sure whether they have met the requirements of a good test for young learners. So as to avoid children's demonstration for the students may result in creating a negative attitude towards the target language. In other words, it may demotivate the children to learn the target language and English may become a monster for them to learn in their future learning of English at SMP.

All in all, it is recommended that the teaching of English should commence at the fourth year of elementary school with some required considerations in the five factors influencing the students' achievement of English such as, the time of learning, the teacher's characteristics, the teaching and learning process characteristics, the socio-economic context, and the students' characteristics.

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